United Nations S/PV.7171

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7171st meeting
Monday, 12 May 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Oh Joon	(Republic of Korea)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. De Antueno
	Australia	Ms. King
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Gálvez
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Mrs. Kazragienė
	Luxembourg	Mr. Maes
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Rwanda	Mr. Gasana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

Central African region

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2014/319)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

14-33072 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Central African region

Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2014/319)

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/319, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas.

I now give the floor to Mr. Moussa.

Mr. Moussa (*spoke in French*): I have the honour and privilege to introduce today the sixth report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2014/319).

The report before the Council stresses that the political and security situation in Central Africa remains fragile. Since the previous report published in November 2013 (S/2013/671), armed violence has undermined efforts to promote and ensure stability in the subregion. Moreover, new cross-border challenges have emerged. In particular, the outbreak of communal violence in the Central African Republic since December 2013 has had considerable regional impact, given the serious consequences of the crisis on the security, economic and humanitarian fields for neighbouring countries.

At the same time, the violence that has broken out in South Sudan since December 2013 has jeopardized the implementation of the African Union's Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army. The crisis in South Sudan has led the Governments of Uganda and South Sudan to withdraw some of their troops from the African Union's regional intervention force responsible for the struggle against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

The Boko Haram group, based in Nigeria, is another cause of serious concern for Central Africa. That Islamist group continues to exploit the porous borders between north-eastern Nigeria and neighbouring States, and the recent intensification of its violent activities have grave security and humanitarian consequences for Cameroon and Chad. Last month, the kidnapping by Boko Haram of more than 200 school girls near the border of Cameroon and Chad and the statements by its leaders that the girls would be sold resulted, rightly, in a strong condemnation by the international community.

(*spoke in English*)

The report before the Council also details the initiatives of UNOCA to promote stability in the subregion during the reporting period. Of note, my missions to Chad, Cameroon, the Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo highlighted the regional consequences of the crisis in the Central African Republic, including humanitarian challenges faced by Governments and United Nations agencies. Those States also expressed concern that flows of weapons, activities by armed groups and sectarian violence may spread across the Central African Republic's borders and threaten their own stability.

UNOCA continued its collaboration with the African Union to coordinate international efforts within the framework of the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the Lord's Resistance Army. I am pleased to inform the Council that the number of LRA-related deaths, abductions and displaced persons have continued to decline, while military operations and the defection campaign have further weakened the LRA. During the fourth ministerial meeting of the Joint Coordinating Mechanism of the Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army, participating countries renewed their political commitment to the initiative by endorsing my proposal to convene a high-level summit on the Lord's Resistance Army, as mandated by this body, and agreeing to review progress on a quarterly basis.

UNOCA also supported initiatives to promote cooperation among Central African States on critical security challenges, notably piracy and armed robbery

in the Gulf of Guinea. The recent convening of the first Interregional Working Group on the establishment of the Interregional Coordination Centre reaffirmed the commitment of Gulf of Guinea States to combat maritime insecurity coherently. The elaboration of the 2014-2016 road map and action plan for operationalizing the Interregional Coordination Centre, starting in June 2014, is a welcome development.

While those are some of UNOCA's efforts for the latest reporting period, I would like to take the opportunity to highlight some of the overarching achievements during my three-year tenure as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA.

First, UNOCA organized five ministerial meetings of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (UNSAC), upon assuming secretariat functions in 2011. UNOCA has ensured that this forum has a real impact on addressing security threats in Central Africa. Poaching and transnational crime are now standing agenda items at UNSAC meetings, and UNSAC decisions have resulted in a series of initiatives to support States in developing an integrated counter-terrorism strategy for Central Africa.

Secondly, UNOCA signed and elaborated a framework of cooperation with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in 2012 in the area of peace and security. UNOCA has supported the enhancement of ECCAS capacity in the area of mediation, and has systematically encouraged and facilitated the inclusion of ECCAS in joint missions within the subregion. UNOCA has forged a solid partnership with ECCAS, which has proven to be mutually beneficial. Close cooperation takes place at the strategic and operational levels.

Thirdly, UNOCA, together with the United Nations Office for West Africa, supported three subregional organizations — ECCAS, the Economic Community of West African States and the Gulf of Guinea Commission — in organizing a successful regional Heads of State Summit in June 2013 in Yaoundé on piracy and armed robbery in the Gulf of Guinea. Mandated by the Council through resolutions 2018 (2011) and 2039 (2012), the initiative established the framework to combat maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea through a comprehensive global approach. UNOCA continues to work with those subregional organizations to operationalize the decisions adopted at the Summit.

Fourthly, UNOCA, together with the Department of Political Affairs, spearheaded the development of the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the LRA, which the Council endorsed in June 2012. That was followed, in 2013, by the development of an implementation plan of activities. Routine joint diplomatic missions with the African Union Special Envoy for the Lord's Resistance Army Issue and the convening of the biannual meeting of LRA focal points have ensured the integration of political, military and civilian efforts. Significant gains have been made over the past three years. Overall, we have overseen a period of forward momentum, which must be maintained well into the post-Kony phase.

Central Africa lies at the heart of the continent. It is rich in resources, yet remains one of the most underdeveloped and volatile subregions in Africa. Its potential, however, is unlimited. I have observed first-hand the political commitment of ECCAS member States to address critical challenges such as the crisis in the Central African Republic and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. However, despite the efforts made by leaders of Central African countries and their peoples, the subregion remains fragile and continues to require ongoing support from the international community, particularly the United Nations. I am confident that, with the Council's continuing support and guidance, UNOCA will continue to play an instrumental role in supporting the States of the subregion in confronting the pressing challenges that threaten peace, stability and development in Central Africa.

As I depart, I am honoured to have been given the opportunity to shepherd UNOCA since its establishment in 2011. I would like to take this opportunity to wish Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily, the incoming Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, success in carrying out his mandate.

I would like to recognize the Heads of State and Government of Central Africa for their cooperation. I wish to express my gratitude to the subregional and regional organizations, notably the African Union, ECCAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission. On the LRA, I have particularly enjoyed the constructive partnerships with the Special Envoy of the African Union on the LRA issue, Francisco Madeira, and

numerous non-governmental organizations. My thanks go to the United Nations Resident Coordinators in Central Africa and the Heads of United Nations missions and entities in and around the subregion for their collaboration. I want to acknowledge the guidance and support provided by the Department of Political Affairs and to thank all the colleagues in my office. Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General for the opportunity to serve as his Special Representative for Central Africa and to the members of the Council for their steadfast support to UNOCA during my tenure.

The President: I thank Mr. Moussa for his briefing.

Mr. Wilson (United Kingdom): I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Moussa for his statement this morning. I pay tribute to him for his contribution to peace and security in the Central African region during his tenure at the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). The United Kingdom looks forward to working closely with his successor, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily, on the broad range of issues that UNOCA is working to address.

The Central African region is beset by a wide range of security challenges: armed groups, which exploit local populations and natural resources to sustain their way of life; piracy, which damages regional prosperity and security; terrorism, which strikes fear into communities; and internal conflict, which results in human rights abuses and threats to democracy. What those challenges have in common is that they cross borders. Overcoming them requires the support and cooperation of neighbouring countries. That is why the work of UNOCA is central to consolidating peace and preventing conflict in the region.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has struck fear into the lives of civilians in the heart of Africa for almost 30 years. It remains an abhorrent menace to peace and security across the region. The concerted efforts of Uganda, the other affected countries, the African Union (AU), the United Nations and other partners have substantially weakened the LRA. Our goal now must be the permanent eradication of the threat it poses. Countries of the region and the international community must further their efforts to achieve security and stability in the affected countries. That means all regional Governments fulfilling their commitments under the African Union's Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army and ensuring that the AU Regional Task Force is fully operational in conducting patrols in their territory. Until that happens, the LRA will continue to evade capture by moving across the porous borders of affected countries, continuing to carry out their reprehensible acts of criminality with impunity.

Cross-border coordination between the United Nations missions and the LRA-affected countries must also be enhanced. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) should ensure that they coordinate closely with the AU Regional Task Force, sharing information rapidly and harmonizing troop deployments. That will help to ensure that the LRA no longer has safe havens in areas of the Central African Republic currently out of reach of the Regional Task Force. The United Kingdom also calls on the Sudanese Government to ensure that the Kafia Kingi enclave does not become a safe haven for the LRA.

Turning to another aspect of UNOCA's broader role, UNOCA coordinates activity to combat the illegal wildlife trade. Central Africa has displayed the highest levels of poaching on the African continent and has lost two thirds of its elephant population since 2004. Poaching and the illegal wildlife trade not only threaten individual species, but also strike at the heart of our goals for good governance, the protection of national and regional security and sustainable economic development. The United Kingdom welcomes steps taken by regional partners to address those issues. Chad recently burned over a ton of its ivory stockpile, thereby showing that it will not tolerate the trade in elephants, and Ethiopia has committed to similar action.

There are a number of alarming developments in the wider region. The United Kingdom remains extremely concerned about the situation in the Central African Republic. The humanitarian situation is dire, and armed groups continue to commit human rights abuses and to terrorize communities across the country. The United Kingdom welcomes the decision to deploy MINUSCA from 15 September 2014, which will help to improve security in the country with the goal of promoting reconciliation and recovery.

The United Kingdom also continues to be concerned by rising political tensions and the closing of political space in Burundi ahead of elections in May 2015. The international community has a responsibility to ensure

that Burundi does not deteriorate further. A continued international presence in Burundi is vital.

We have all been appalled by the kidnapping of over 200 schoolgirls in northern Nigeria last month. Boko Haram is a morally repugnant organization that is committing vile acts of terrorism. The United Kingdom is providing assistance to the Nigerian Government with their response to that incident. We sent a team of experts to Nigeria to assist them in finding the missing schoolgirls and to help develop Nigeria's capacity to prevent similar incidents in the future.

However, any effective response to the threat posed by Boko Haram must be carried out in coordination with Nigeria's neighbours. We are increasingly concerned about reports that indicate that Boko Haram's influence outside Nigeria's borders is growing. It is likely that they may now be operating in southern Niger, parts of northern Cameroon and around Lake Chad. We call on Governments in the region to increase cooperation on the issue and to clearly demonstrate a joint commitment to tackling the problem. We also call on the international community to address Boko Haram's activities before its position as a regional threat is consolidated.

UNOCA plays a vital role in helping the region overcome those challenges. The efforts of incoming Special Representative of the Secretary-General Bathily will be of critical importance in identifying and pushing forward regional solutions to those cross-border problems.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Abou Moussa for his briefing and the Secretary-General for his report (S/2014/319). The report of the Secretary-General on Central Africa is illustration of an alarming deterioration of the political, security and humanitarian situation in the region.

At the previous Council meeting on this subject, in November 2013 (see S/PV.7065), I sounded the alarm on the Central African Republic in order to mobilize our partners to address that crisis, which had been ignored for too long. Six months later, the regional consequences that we predicted have become a reality, and the humanitarian crisis in that country is a tragedy. Fortunately, the international community and the Council have rallied. We hope that the concerted commitment of the countries of the region, the African Union, the United Nations, the European Union, the United States and France will finally stop this downward spiral.

As can be seen in the report of the Secretary-General, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is taking advantage of the security vacuum in certain remote areas of the vast country of the Central African Republic and, it is likely, the complicity of armed groups, including the ex-Séléka. While the threat is diminishing in other regions, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, we must continue our efforts to ensure that LRA members cannot thrive in those areas such as the Kafia Kingi enclave, on the border of the Central African Republic, the Sudan and South Sudan, where Joseph Kony and his entourage have again found refuge.

We welcome the work of the African Union Regional Task Force of the African Union-led Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army, and the commitment of its constituent countries and the partners that support it. The Task Force's operations were successful, and we hope that the commitment of the main countries concerned will not falter until the threat is eradicated. Such robust military action must also be undertaken alongside continued humanitarian efforts for the victims of that insecure situation. We are happy to read that the number of displaced persons has decreased. We urge the Governments of the region to take interest in the fate of those who have returned home, who are often impoverished and have lost everything.

Finally, we must not forget the need for justice, and thus bring to justice the senior leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army. Joseph Kony is the subject of an international arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on 8 July 2005 that has still not been implemented. We encourage the States concerned that are parties to the Rome Statute to strengthen their cooperation and collaboration with the Court so that Kony can be arrested, delivered and held to account for his heinous acts.

While the threat of the LRA is diminishing, we are now witnessing the emergence of another movement on the regional scene, the Boko Haram and Ansaru terrorist groups. In that connection, the abduction of hundreds of young girls and the increasing attacks claimed by Boko Haram in Nigeria are disgusting. We condemn them firmly and reiterate our support and our sympathies for the Nigerian authorities. The Secretary-General's report on Central Africa highlights the regional consequences of the group's activities in Cameroon, and we cannot completely exclude their potential to affect the Central

African Republic and Chad. We welcome the initiatives undertaken by States of the region to combat this threat and offer them our full support, including, as the President of France just announced, through a summit for the countries bordering Nigeria to be held in Paris on Saturday 17 May, in order to discuss the security problems linked to Boko Haram. We encourage the United Nations Regional Office to continue supporting the authorities in the region.

There are numerous transnational threats in the region, including not just terrorism but also trafficking in endangered species and drugs, as well as piracy. With South Sudan's collapse into civil war on 15 December, there is little room for optimism. In this difficult atmosphere, we encourage States and subregional organizations in the region to continue to cooperate, and we call on every State to help them. The support of the United Nations Regional Office is essential and we are grateful for its efforts to conduct preventive diplomacy and dialogue in this area.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Abou Moussa for his commitment as Head of the United Nations Regional Office in Central Africa for the past three years, and to welcome his successor, Mr. Bathily, who has the difficult task of continuing to mobilize the countries of the region to combat these threats and destabilizing factors together.

Mr. Gálvez (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Regional Office in Central Africa (UNOCA), Mr. Abou Moussa, and to express our appreciation for his staff's excellent work in supporting and coordinating the Organization's initiatives and the regional efforts aimed at preventing conflicts and building peace in Central Africa and at promoting preventive diplomacy and mediation in the subregion.

We hope that Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily and UNOCA will be able to count on the support needed for the continued implementation of the United Nations regional strategy designed to address the threat and consequences of the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and to support the Regional Task Force of the African Union-led Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA, working with the countries affected to that end.

Chile supports the recommendations in the Secretary-General's report (S/2014/319), so we will mention just a few aspects that deserve particular attention.

While the report notes a decrease in the activities of the LRA in the subregion, the crises in the Central African Republic and South Sudan, and the withdrawal of troops provided by Uganda and South Sudan from the Regional Task Force, has created security vulnerabilities that the LRA could exploit. We therefore recommend redoubling the efforts to eliminate the LRA and prevent its association with members of other armed groups, such as the ex-Séléka. Moreover, the threat of that group has led many humanitarian non-governmental organizations to restrict their activities. We should therefore urge donors to support recuperative activities without delay in order to restore basic livelihoods and essential services in the affected communities.

We should step up efforts to implement the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court against Joseph Kony and other LRA commanders on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, rape and child recruitment through kidnapping. The news of the capture by the African Union's Task Force of LRA commander Charles Okello and rescue of three women and seven children on 21 April is a positive sign.

The international community should continue to actively support the countries of Central Africa in their efforts to achieve peace and stability and to promote the normalization of the humanitarian and human rights situations, the protection of civilians, dialogue, reconciliation, transitional justice, national capacity-building and integration. In that regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's recent visits to the Central African Republic and South Sudan. We cannot remain indifferent to the deepening humanitarian crisis and its growing impact on those countries' neighbours, the inter-and intra-community violence, including sexual violence — which has reached alarming proportions in the Central African Republic — the threat of terrorism, the continuing maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, the illegal trade in wildlife and transnational organized crime.

One of the significant challenges to peacebuilding and sustainable development in Central Africa is widespread unemployment among young people, which leaves them vulnerable to recruitment and re-recruitment. Young refugees and internally displaced persons deserve special attention, due to their double

vulnerability to recruitment by terrorists and armed groups. While we are aware of the limitations on the staff of UNOCA, which has had to resort to financing outside the regular budget, we urge it to focus its initiatives in this area in partnership with the Economic Community of Central African States, the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Development Programme, the Peacebuilding Commission and other key regional and international stakeholders.

We commend the leadership and coordinating role played by relevant regional organizations. We urge UNOCA to support their initiatives, such as the subregional commitments to implementing the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and combatting the illegal trade in forest flora and fauna that finances armed groups; the agreement of the six member States of the Lake Chad Basin Commission to establish the Multinational Joint Task Force to combat the threats posed by the militants of Boko Haram; the African Union's 2050 Integrated Maritime Strategy; and the implementation of a road map and action plan for working towards the establishment of an inter-regional centre for coordination. In that regard , we hope UNOCA will continue to support the work of the expert groups of the related Sanctions Committees.

We also hope that the establishment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) will contribute to peace and stability in the subregion. We encourage coordination between the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) and the Regional Task Force until the transfer of responsibility from MISCA to MINUSCA on 15 September, and we support the efforts of the AU Commission's technical assessment mission to that end. Similarly, we should promote coordination and the exchange of information between the Task Force, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the recently created MINUSCA.

Ms. King (Australia): I would like to thank Special Representative Abou Moussa for his briefing and for his dedication to pursuing the importance mandate of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). As Mr. Moussa has said, Central Africa faces critical challenges to its peace and security and requires ongoing support from the United Nations. Today's meeting provides an important opportunity for the Council to look holistically at the issues and the role that UNOCA and the broader United Nations presence in the subregion can play in addressing them.

Most prominent among these challenges, perhaps, is the situation in the Central African Republic, one of the most dire human rights and humanitarian crises confronting the Council and the world. Communities in the Central African Republic that have previously coexisted in peace have been decimated by cycles of violence and revenge. The country is being torn apart, with severe consequences for the region. We pay tribute to the African and French forces that deployed quickly to the Central African Republic and took military action that has literally saved many lives. The adoption of resolution 2149 (2014), authorizing the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) should mark a turning point in the international response to the crisis.

We have also seen the growing threat of terrorism in Central Africa, including the expansion of Boko Haram into the region. We have all condemned Boko Haram's recent attacks against civilians and its abduction of more than 200 schoolgirls in Nigeria, an act that has shocked the global conscience. Like others, Australia has offered its support to the Government of Nigeria.

The abhorrent targeting of schoolchildren brings to mind the tactics of another group that has wreaked havoc on the region — the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). That group's killing, raping, pillaging and maiming has terrorized civilians for more than 20 years. The International Criminal Court arrest warrants for the LRA's leaders — the first arrest warrants issued by the Court — have now been outstanding for close to nine years. It is essential that Joseph Kony and the other surviving senior LRA leaders be held to account for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We have made significant progress towards achieving the goal of putting an end once and for all to the LRA. The recent trends are promising. Overall LRA attacks and resulting deaths are down, despite a seasonal spike; the number of displaced in LRA-affected areas has been halved; and defections are on the rise. Australia commends the African Union (AU) Regional Task Force for its significant impact in the fight against the LRA and the critical support being

provided by the United States and European Union. We welcome the recent capture of LRA commander Charles Okello in an operation that also rescued three women and seven children. My first central message is this — we must maintain the momentum and support for current efforts to put an end to the LRA.

We are concerned, however, that the crises in the Central African Republic and in South Sudan risk undermining the progress achieved to date by diverting attention, resources and regional security forces away from anti-LRA efforts. We are also concerned by reports that senior LRA leaders may be based in north-eastern Central African Republic and that some ex-Séléka combatants are suspected to be colluding with the LRA. The Secretary-General's report (S/2014/319) also cites credible sources suggesting that LRA leader Joseph Kony and senior LRA commanders have recently returned to seek safe haven in the Kafia Kingi enclave between the Sudan, South Sudan and the Central African Republic. We know that the LRA will exploit any security vacuum and seize the opportunity to regroup. That is its modus operandi. Since the collapse of State authority in the Central African Republic, LRA attacks in the country's east have risen sharply, and the group has targeted prefectures outside the AU Regional Task Force's principal area of operations.

That brings me to my second point. It is imperative that the United Nations and African Union missions in the region — the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic, MINUSCA and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur — continue to deepen their information-sharing, coordination and cooperation in efforts to combat the LRA. The various sanctions committees and groups of experts active in the region are an important component of that effort and can provide further information and options to address the LRA's financing, weapons and operations.

By leveraging the resources deployed in the region and increasing coordination among them, we can better protect civilians in LRA-affected areas and keep ahead of the LRA. Otherwise, gains made in increasing stability in one area risk being offset by the re-emergence of the LRA elsewhere. Indeed, that has been the case following security gains made around the Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has been followed by a rise in attacks further west — hence the logical conclusion is that UNOCA has an important overarching role, in particular to enhance the implementation of the United Nations regional strategy.

Finally, we must support UNOCA and regional-led efforts to address other, often related challenges to Central Africa's peace and security, including the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the poaching and trafficking of wildlife. The development of a road map for counter-terrorism and the non-proliferation of small and light weapons in Central Africa, and the pledge by regional leaders to honour the 10-year moratorium on the sale of ivory stockpiles to protect elephants, are all important initiatives. Those types of initiatives will help to restrict and reduce the illicit means by which the LRA and other groups are able to arm themselves, and are fundamental to long-term peace and stability in the region.

Let me conclude by thanking Special Representative Moussa again for his commitment and leadership since UNOCA's inception. We look forward to working with his successor, Mr. Bathily.

Ms. Power (United States of America): I thank Special Representative Moussa for his briefing and for all his efforts on behalf of peace in the Central African region.

Today marks a pivotal moment to reflect strategically on the myriad of growing concerns surrounding the Central African region, which risks full implosion. Flanked by conflict from the Great Lakes to its immediate south, a struggling new nation to its east, burgeoning terror threats to its west and an explosive religious conflict at its core, the region is one that we must prioritize. We ignore those trend lines and their ability to handicap the region's trajectory towards growth to our peril.

We view with horror and outrage the ongoing campaign of destruction perpetrated by Boko Haram, which is migrating east and knocking on Central Africa's door. Boko Haram has primarily chosen targets who cannot fight back: students, hospital patients, teachers and other unarmed civilians. The abduction last month of more 200 Nigerian schoolgirls and subsequent public threats to sell the girls into slavery have shocked us to the core, not only as diplomats and policy leaders but also as parents and human beings.

Boko Haram has no agenda other than cowardice, sadism, ignorance and death. As such, it has made itself the adversary of people everywhere. My Government has pledged its support to the Nigerian Government in helping to return the girls to their homes. We are prepared to assist the region in developing a comprehensive strategy to defeat Boko Haram, including by pursuing United Nations sanctions against that group, and to hold its murderous leaders accountable for their actions. My Government has been in close communication with Nigerian officials, including Ambassador Ogwu here in New York, and we will do all we can to support their efforts to ensure that the missing schoolgirls are returned safely to their homes.

Of course, in stealing children, Boko Haram is mimicking tactics first used in the region by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). For more than two decades, the LRA has ravaged the lives of tens of thousands of men, women and children, who have been displaced, maimed, abducted or killed across four countries. In the process, the LRA has compelled countless young people to serve as underage soldiers and sex slaves. Our goal has been, and remains to bring that scourge to a complete and decisive end. My Government commends the African Union (AU) Regional Task Force and its partners for making important progress. If defector reports are accurate, the LRA's second-in-command, Okot Odhiambo — one of several prominent LRA leaders who have been indicted by the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity — was killed late last year. That represents a substantial blow to what little remains of the LRA's command structure.

In the past few years, military and political efforts, combined with strong civil society advocacy, have reduced LRA combatants from more than 1,000 to a small fraction of that number. Between 2011 and 2013, the number of people killed by LRA attacks dropped by 75 per cent, and the level of abductions by 50 per cent. Since 2012, more than 180 men, women and children have defected or been released. The decline in LRA terror has made it possible for hundreds of thousands to return to their homes, reducing the population displaced by the LRA from more than 320,000 at the end of last year to less than 160,000 today. This still huge and unacceptable number marks the lowest level in over a decade. Credit for these gains belongs to the AU Regional Task Force, international peacekeepers, non-governmental organizations and leaders of local civil society.

Because of this progress, the LRA is becoming less relevant. As the threat recedes further, we should place greater emphasis on working with local leaders to help affected communities to recover. We urge the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) to coordinate with the AU, the World Bank, national Governments and other stakeholders to advance a plan for the long-term stabilization of those areas. Over the past five years, the United States Government has provided more than $87 million to enhance food security, health, development and other priorities in communities harmed by LRA violence. Collectively, we must ensure that areas ravaged by the LRA are able at long last to enjoy the benefits of peace.

Despite some progress, we remain concerned about reports of unfettered LRA activity in the north-eastern parts of the Central African Republic, a country that is beset simultaneously by brutal religious violence and immense and growing humanitarian needs. We find the reports of possible LRA collusion with former Séléka fighters to be particularly disturbing, and we have no doubt that Boko Haram would like nothing more than to exploit the despair of displaced Muslims in the northern part of the Central African Republic.

My Government also shares the Secretary-General's concern about the possibility that LRA leaders have again sought a safe haven in Sudanese-controlled areas of the Kafia Kindi enclave. We call on the Government in Khartoum to work cooperatively with the AU to investigate these reports and to deny the LRA any form of rest or support. Any Government should be embarrassed to be sheltering the Lord's Resistance Army. After a quarter-century of merciless brutality, the LRA should not be tolerated, let alone helped, by anyone — not to mention a State Member of the United Nations.

I can assure the Council that the United States will remain steadfast in providing tangible and wide-ranging assistance to anti-LRA efforts, including military advisers, air-lift support, humanitarian aid, civilian protection and measures aimed at encouraging defections. We look forward to the day, which we hope will come soon, when all LRA combatants are removed from the battlefield.

Mindful that the LRA is but one of many significant threats to peace and security in Central Africa, my Government applauds the Council's decision to authorize a United Nations peacekeeping mission

in the Central African Republic. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) must do the critical work of protecting civilians, facilitating urgently needed humanitarian access, and supporting the State in that country, which is of course in a weakened position. We call on MINUSCA to coordinate closely with the many actors — the African-led International Support Mission for the Central African Republic (MISCA), French and European Union forces, and the AU Regional Task Force — that are currently deployed and will remain in the Central African Republic. But above all, we urge Member States to support MISCA and the African Union, which is still trying to protect civilians alongside France and the European Union, and to contribute to MINUSCA, as timely force-generation for both MISCA and MINUSCA is critically needed and needed now.

We also express our alarm, as others have done, at the deteriorating political situation in Burundi, where the Government has harrassed and arrested members of opposition parties, pushed for the end of the United Nations political mission in advance of a very fragile election period, and is imposing growing restrictions on civil society, and where we have all seen alarming reports of youth militia being armed, to which the Government has responded only by expelling the United Nations mission's security adviser. We urge UNOCA to spare no effort at preventive diplomacy.

We remain at a difficult time in Central Africa. International cooperation has been encouraging, but we must do far more to confront Boko Haram, to complete the destruction of the LRA, to counter religious strife and prevent ethnic cleansing, and to disrupt the activities of criminals who seek to prey on the innocent and the weak. The next months will be critical in each of these areas, and we must take advantage of every opportunity to turn the tide on all fronts.

Mr. Gasana (Rwanda): I thank you, Sir, for convening this meeting. I also thank Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, for his briefing.

The situation in the Central African region has deteriorated in the past month, mainly due to the conflicts in the Central African Republic and in South Sudan. This has put the whole region at risk, with unprecedented security and humanitarian consequences, which could have a negative impact on the progress achieved so far, such as in the fight against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and other negative forces. Despite those crises and the threat of instability, several countries in the Central African region have registered tremendous economic growth. This shows that the Central African region has the potential to escape the current negative spiral and should therefore be further supported.

We welcome the progress achieved in weakening the LRA, including through the success registered on the ground by the African Union (AU) Regional Task Force, supported by the United States. The reported number of LRA attacks, abductions and killings during the first quarter of 2014 in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo has decreased as compared to previous years, not to mention that the LRA has been further weakened due to defection and military pressure, leading it to operate in survival mode and in small groups. Nevertheless, that terrorist organization still possesses the capacity to destabilize the subregion. It is therefore important that the international community maintain this momentum so as to ensure that the LRA is eradicated once and for all.

As we commend the fruitful cooperation between the AU, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), the United States and the European Union in the fight against the LRA, we believe that coordination and information-sharing between the AU Regional Task Force and the United Nations missions deployed in countries of the region — mainly the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the African-led International Support Mission for the Central African Republic, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur — are critical to ending the threat posed by the LRA.

In addition to military operations, it is also important to sustain the progress achieved so far by stepping up support to peacebuilding activities and by improving national capacities. This would include financial support to the United Nations regional strategy, which provides a comprehensive anti-LRA strategy for the LRA-affected areas. In the same vein,

financial support for the AU Regional Task Force is very critical to ending the threat posed by the LRA.

Last month, the world was shocked by the abduction of more than 200 schoolgirls in Chibok, Nigeria, by Boko Haram. This terrorist organization also kidnapped eight girls last week in Warabe, Nigeria. We strongly condemn these abductions, and we extend our solidarity to the affected families and to the Government and the people of Nigeria. We shall all remain committed to supporting Nigeria in its efforts to bring back our girls.

In that context, as Boko Haram expands its activities into several Central African countries, it is important to further strengthen regional cooperation in security and cross-border issues. We welcome in this regard the meeting of the six members of the Lake Chad Basin Commission — Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Libya, Niger and Nigeria — that took place in Cameroon in March to establish the Multinational Joint Task Force, aimed at addressing the security threat posed by terrorism in the region. We also commend the invitation extended by President Hollande to a meeting to be held on 17 May in Paris.

Terrorist piracy and armed robbery at sea, as well as organized crime, constitute critical security challenges in the region, with a negative impact on the economy, as these threats deprive the region of investment, viable economic activities and related fiscal revenue. We commend the efforts of the region and the progress achieved since the holding of the Yaoundé summit in June 2013, which yielded the establishment of the Interregional Coordination Centre and the elaboration of a concrete 2014-2016 action plan.

The efforts of UNOCA in preventing conflicts in the Central African region should be commended and supported. With six countries of the region holding elections in 2015, and more in 2016, we believe that UNOCA should be given proper and adequate resources to ensure that those elections are held smoothly. In addition, given the security situation in the Central African Republic and the rise of terrorism in some countries of the region, UNOCA needs to be allocated the necessary resources to fulfil its mandate.

In conclusion, Rwanda wishes to express its appreciation to UNOCA for the work done since 2011 under the remarkable leadership of outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abou Moussa. We pay tribute to him on his achievements and wish him all the best in his future endeavours. We also take this opportunity to welcome the incoming Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily. We assure him of our full support.

Lastly, Rwanda supports the draft presidential statement that the Council will adopt later today.

Mrs. Kazragienė (Lithuania): Let me begin by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Abou Moussa for his briefing on the latest activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and on the implementation of the regional strategy on the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). I want to express my delegation's appreciation for his leadership and dedicated service in implementing the challenging mandate, which brought about tangible results in promoting peace and security in the Central African region. I also welcome the appointment of Abdoulaye Bathily as the incoming Head of UNOCA.

The results of the activities of the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative against the LRA and of the African Union Regional Task Force, as well as those of other regional and international actors, are obvious. We see a sharp decrease in the number of LRA fighters and in the overall number of attacks attributable to that terrorist group. We understand that the LRA is now primarily involved in survival-mode activities and that its command structure is weakened.

However, the threat posed by the group has not passed. One hundred and sixty thousand civilians remain under constant threat. We should not remain complacent. UNOCA's role is vital, especially as the deteriorating security situation in the Central African Republic and South Sudan threatens to undermine the progress made thus far. We note with concern the increased LRA activities in the Central African Republic, where the leaders of the LRA are reported to be based now. We urge all concerned countries in the region to fulfil their commitments to fighting the LRA, including by contributing troops to the African Union Regional Task Force. We note that it is crucial to ensure close cross-border cooperation and information-sharing among actors in the region. We also note the importance of enhancing collaboration between the Regional Task Force and the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic, as well as with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic.

UNOCA will continue to play a leading role in fostering the development of long-term programmes

to address humanitarian problems in LRA-affected areas. Many civilians will depend on humanitarian assistance. We also stress the importance of developing and promoting disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in LRA-affected areas as one of the means of addressing the threat posed by that terrorist group and encouraging further defections. Former combatants must be provided with an opportunity for reintegration into society and the possibility of different life to avoid their return to rebel life.

The challenge remains how to successfully reintegrate children abducted by the LRA. In that regard, we welcome Chad's intention to sign a protocol on the release of 46 children who were associated with ex-Séléka in Koro-Toro, as well as the plan to develop a reintegration plan. We commend UNICEF for its work on child protection and the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence in LRA-affected countries. It is important to put an end to those crimes and to ensure accountability for the perpetrators.

Let me express our concern over the Boko Haram terrorist group, whose activities across the borders of Nigeria pose a threat to security in the broader region. We strongly condemn Taliban-style acts of violence against schoolgirls in Chibok, in the Borno state of Nigeria. That is a grave violation of international and national laws. Education is a human right, and girls throughout the entire world should be able to pursue it free from violence, fear and intimidation. The girls must be released immediately and unconditionally. Abduction, sexual violence and exploitation constitute grave violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, and may amount to crimes against humanity as defined in the Rome Statute. Therefore, the crimes by Boko Haram should be addressed by the International Criminal Court.

The violent acts of Boko Haram remind us that women's rights are constantly under assault, thereby undermining gender rights, equality and development. We are deeply concerned that the activities of Boko Haram force thousands of people to flee their homes, schools and fields. We commend and encourage regional initiatives to strengthen cooperation in addressing the security threats posed by terrorist groups, as well to tackle the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

As noted by Mr. Moussa, the humanitarian effect of the Central African Republic crisis on countries in the region is yet another issue to address. Neighbouring countries continue to receive high numbers of refugees, many of whom are women and children. We welcome the advancement in the inter-agency Regional Response Plan, which is aimed at addressing the growing humanitarian needs. We urge its implementation and encourage strong engagement by international actors.

Rising maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, poaching and the illegal trade in resources in the region remain of great concern. That has to be addressed, in particular as transnational rebel and terrorist groups in the Central African region, including the LRA, are financed through such activities. We welcome the regional and international activities to tackle the challenge and we commend UNOCA's engagement in mobilizing a cooperative approach to the issue among the countries of the region.

Finally, Lithuania encourages an enhanced, comprehensive and more regional approach to address the threats faced by Central African States. Let me conclude by expressing our full support for the activities of UNOCA.

Mr. Cherif (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank Mr. Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, for his briefing.

The crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, as well as the presence of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) on the borders of those countries, makes Central Africa a breeding ground for very worrying insecurity. The seriousness of that threat has led the United Nations, the African Union, the international community and subregional organizations to mobilize in order to find appropriate solutions. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the outcome of that joint effort has led to a relative improvement in the situation following the defeat last December of the main armed group, the Mouvement du 23 mars. Nevertheless, the security situation remains volatile and huge efforts must still be made to consolidate peace and stability in the country.

The Boko Haram terrorist group, whose activities span the borders of neighbouring Nigeria, poses a real threat today, both for Central Africa and for the entire Sahel region. Chad condemns the kidnapping in Nigeria of more than 200 young high school girls by Boko Haram and expresses its solidarity with Nigeria. In that regard, Chad welcomes the international community's

strong mobilization in the fight against such terrorist groups.

The violence in the Central African Republic recently reached unimaginable levels. More than 6,000 children aged between 8 and 14 years old have been torn from their families by rival armed groups, who force them to torture, kill and carry out sexual violence in public to demoralize and humiliate the rival community. Humanitarian personnel of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are working in a climate of insecurity and are under threat daily. The Central African Republic today is a country half-emptied of its population. Armed gangs have divided the capital, as they have the entire country, into areas of influence, and attacks against the civilian population continue.

It is against that backdrop of a total lack of security that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) is preparing to deploy on 15 September, in accordance with resolution 2149 (2014). But in the immediate term, Chad believes it would be important for the United Nations, in coordination with the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and the countries of the region, undertake urgent efforts, among other things, go consolidate the authority of the State and its ability to perform all of its functions, ensure the safety of civilian populations and humanitarian personnel, guarantee access for humanitarian aid to populations in need, pay the salaries of State employees and put basic services on a stronger footing so as to reduce tensions. Putting those conditions in place, in our humble opinion, would allow for the return of refugees and displaced persons as well as facilitate preparations for the deployment of MINUSCA.

The fight against the LRA continues because the armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and the Central African Republic create positive conditions for them, undermining the efforts of the international community. Chad welcomes the coordination efforts carried out by UNOCA to implement the regional strategy of the United Nations against the threat and impact of the LRA and the African Union's anti-LRA Regional Cooperation Initiative.

Furthermore, we welcome the determination of the United States of America in the fight against the LRA. Their human resources, financial, material and logistical support are crucial for intelligence-gathering and aerial surveillance of elements of the LRA. We also welcome the valuable support of the European Union as well as the role played by United Nations agencies, donors and NGOs to assist civilians in the areas affected by the activities of the LRA.

The reported death of in 2013 of Okot Odhiambo, the LRA's second-in-command, who was subject to an arrest warrant of the International Criminal Court, the capture of Commander Charles Okello in April, and the defection of a large number of LRA fighters, saving dozens of women and children, are further encouraging results of the joint efforts.

Despite such encouraging achievements, the reported presence of LRA leaders in the north-east of the Central African Republic and its increased activities in the east of the country, on one hand, and its intensified activities in the west of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, on the other, remain cause for concern. In that regard, the international community must keep up the pressure on the remaining scattered elements, which are a small, highly mobile group, in order to eradicate them.

The threats to security in Central Africa require robust efforts from the international community and close cooperation among the countries involved in the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, as well as in the coordination of joint border-control mechanisms. UNOCA has a key role to play in such joint efforts. Chad therefore calls for the strengthening of the necessary resources, for the smooth functioning of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa in the light of the ever-growing threats imperilling that region. The multiple security challenges facing the subregion, which I have addressed, require decisive involvement by the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and continuous follow-up.

In conclusion, I would like to pay sincere tribute to Mr. Abou Moussa for his excellent work as the Head of UNOCA, and for all of the service he has given to the United Nations in the 34 years of his career in the Organization. I wish him well on his return to Chad and the greatest of success in his future endeavours.

I would also like to welcome the appointment of Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily as the new the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of

UNOCA, and to wish him the greatest of success in his new role.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Moussa, for his briefing.

The general situation in the Central African region has recently been mixed. While China welcomes the clear improvement in the Great Lakes region and the progress in regional integration, the situation in the Central African Republic remains volatile, with increasing regional terrorist activities and transnational organized crime. Central Africa continues to face multiple challenges, some of which are common, to a certain extent, throughout Africa. This requires continued concerted efforts on the part of countries of the region and the international community. In that regard, I would like to emphasize the following three points.

First, in settling the issues in Central Africa, the imperative must be to stabilize the regional situation as soon as possible. Stability is a precondition for development. The deterioration of the situation in the Central African Republic and the troubles created by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) have had a disastrous effect on the countries in the region and their population. China expresses its concern in that regard. We call on the international community to expedite its support to the Central African Republic so as to help the country promptly restore its normal security and social order. We also hope that the United Nations and the African Union will further strengthen their cooperation and work in synergy so as to eradicate the threat posed by the LRA.

Secondly, economic development is key to solving the issues in Central Africa in the long term. It is fundamental for long-term security and stability. The lack of development is one of the root causes of conflicts in Africa. A few days ago, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang visited Africa and announced that the Chinese Government would provide an additional $10 billion in loans to African countries, to be used in such projects as infrastructure development, agriculture and poverty eradication. China hopes that the international community will fulfil its assistance commitments to African countries to help them accelerate socioeconomic development and create employment opportunities, which would in turn eradicate the root causes of conflicts.

Thirdly, in tackling the issues in Central Africa, the ownership of the countries concerned should be rigorously respected. In recent years, regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of Central African States, have come together to promote prosperity through self-reliance, while seeking African solutions to African problems. They have made tremendous efforts to promote peace and development in the region. The international community, in supporting the search for solutions for Central African issues, should fully take into account the opinions of the countries concerned, and maintain close communication the AU and subregional organizations, as well as help them build their capacity to take the lead in solving their own problems.

In its three years of existence, the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) has done a great deal of work in coordinating and promoting the maintenance of peace and security in the region, and Mr. Moussa has made a tremendous personal contribution to that effort. China appreciates those endeavours. We also welcome Mr. Bathily as the incoming Special Representative for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, and expect that he will guide the Office in continuing to proactively implement its mandate. As always, China will continue to support UNOCA's work.

Mr. Maes (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the Regional United Nations Office for Central Africa, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his briefing. Since this is his last statement before the Council in that capacity, I would like to take this opportunity to commend his work to promote peace and security in Central Africa over the past three years. I want to wish every success to his successor, Mr. Abdoulaye Bathily.

Over the past three years, significant progress has been made in operations against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The pressure, military operations and many defections have weakened the group's combat capability. However, the LRA continues to pose a serious threat to the region, in particular to civilians. As a result of the crisis in the Central African Republic, LRA leaders based in the north-east of the Central African Republic have been able to rebuild their forces. We have also noted with concern the credible information suggesting the presence of senior LRA leaders, including Joseph Kony, in the Kafia Kingi

enclave on the border of the Sudan, South Sudan and the Central African Republic.

In that context, we must redouble our efforts to support the African Union's Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army. While the crisis in South Sudan caused the temporary redeployment of troops, we hope that the agreement signed in Addis Ababa on 9 May to resolve the South Sudanese crisis will allow all countries participating in the regional intervention force against the LRA to provide the necessary troops. It is also necessary to mobilize the vital resources and equipment for the effective functioning of that regional force. In that respect, we commend the significant support of the United States and the European Union, which has just provided a new contribution of almost €2 million to the African Union. For its part, in late 2013Luxembourg provided additional financial support for the operation of the regional headquarters of the regional intervention force located in Yambio, South Sudan. Coordination between the United Nations, the African Union and the States affected by the LRA is essential, as is knowledge sharing and cooperation between the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA), which will be rehatted as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) on 15 September. Pending the implementation of MINUSCA, it is imperative that effective coordination is established as soon as possible between the two African Union operations active in the Central African Republic — the regional intervention force against the LRA and MISCA.

Besides military operations, the international community must continue its efforts to promote the stabilization and development of LRA-affected regions. We also encourage all States to cooperate in implementing the arrest warrants issued by the International Criminal Court almost nine years ago against LRA leaders, including Joseph Kony. Accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, rape and the recruitment of children, the main LRA leaders must be brought to justice.

Women and children are the main victims of the LRA. In that context, allow me to underscore the need to fully integrate child protection in the activities of the African Union's regional intervention force and highlight the importance of programmes, such as those of UNICEF, to help with the release, return and reintegration of women and children abducted by the LRA.

Finally, we remain concerned about the linkages between the illicit trade in wild fauna and armed groups operating in Central Africa, in particular the LRA. We therefore encourage UNOCA to continue to support the struggle against poaching and against ivory smuggling in the region.

The situation in Central Africa continues to be severely affected by the crisis in the Central African Republic. Following her visit to Chad on 5 and 6 May, Ms. Valerie Amos highlighted the humanitarian impact of the crisis in the Central African Republic on neighbouring countries, who are hosting a considerable number of refugees. The absence of the rule of law and the security vacuum in the Central African Republic have made it a haven for armed groups.

On 10 April, the Security Council took the important decision to establish the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. Until the deployment of the first Blue Helmets in September, we are supporting MISCA on a bilateral level and through our participation in the European Union military operation in the Central African Republic. Similarly, we commend the vital action of France's Operation Sangaris. Given the persistent serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, the international community must remain vigilant and active. The sanctions adopted on 9 May by the Security Council against three key figures behind the crisis in the Central African Republic are an important measure to help end the climate of impunity prevailing in the country.

In his report (S/2014/319), the Secretary-General notes with concern the activities of Boko Haram, which are not only a threat to the people in Nigeria, but have spread to other countries in the region. We want to reiterate our strongest condemnation of the kidnapping last month of more than 200 schoolgirls in north-eastern Nigeria. Those girls must be released immediately. We strongly condemn the sexual and gender-based violence, kidnappings and attacks against schools. Some of those acts committed by Boko Haram could

constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which Nigeria has ratified. All those responsible must be brought to justice.

In conclusion, on a positive note I would like to commend the work done by UNOCA and the United Nations Office for West Africa in combatting piracy off the coast of the Gulf of Guinea States, which is now the African region most affected by piracy. We welcome the progress achieved in the establishment of the Interregional Coordination Centre with the establishment, in April in Yaoundé, of an interregional action plan for 2014-2016.

Mr. Omaish (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, for the information he presented to us this morning on the work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), as well as for his efforts during the most recent reporting period. We look forward to working with his successor. We express our appreciation to the UNOCA staff, given their considerable responsibilities in dealing with the various issues in the region.

Undoubtedly, the volume of challenges facing the Central African region greatly exceeds the ability of its States to deal with them. Despite the international involvement in addressing the region's multiple and interconnected problems, the lack of sufficient international efforts to address their root causes leads us to continuously seek tentative and partial solutions, instead of achieving sustainable solutions.

My delegation agrees with the contents of the Secretary-General's report (S/2014/319) on the impact of the crisis, which has ravaged the Central African Republic, on the sociopolitical and security situation of the region. While we hope that the general situation in the Central African Republic will subside, particularly after the entrenchment of the troops of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic and the imminent deployment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, addressing the consequences of the crisis, such as regional displacement, the growing menace posed by extremist groups and the persistent illicit trade in natural resources, will require cooperation and coordination among international and regional efforts and a full commitment by States of the region to fulfil their responsibilities and carry out their work to achieve security and stability.

My delegation would like to emphasize that successfully dealing with the threat of terrorist groups revolves around three cardinal points, that is, depriving them of a supportive environment and the ability to recruit; drying up their sources of financial support; and conducting targeted operations against such groups in order to weaken their structural capacities and institutional coherence. Concerted regional efforts must continue with a view to preventing those groups from utilizing the deteriorating situation in the Central African Republic and South Sudan and focusing on border control and full coordination among the States of the region and regional and international organizations.

With regard to terrorist groups, we condemn the abduction of schoolgirls by Boko Haram, and we extend our sympathy to the Government and the people of Nigeria and the families of the girls.

As mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, there has been a remarkable decline in the operations of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), with an attendant decline in murders and abductions. Yet the LRA has reorganized into small groups that are capable of moving swiftly. That shows the continued ability by the LRA's command and control to adapt to the situation on the ground in order to launch isolated border attacks.

The Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army must be fully launched, and the composition of the Regional Task Force should be finalized so that it amounts to 5,000 troops. That will enhance the ability to pursue and track LRA remnants and its leadership in the various areas. There must be logistical and material support for the Regional Task Force so that it is able to fill the preparedness gaps suffered by some troops.

In conclusion, in the framework of this discussion on the LRA, the report of the Secretary-General refers to certain cases of defection by LRA members. We request further information about those cases. We want to know whether the reasons for defection have been studied in a manner that gives a clearer picture of the LRA's organizational situation.

Mr. Laro (Nigeria): I, too, thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Moussa for his briefing. My comments will focus on the fight against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2014/319) indicates that, while some successes have been recorded in that regard, considerable challenges remain. In terms

of successes, we take positive note of the fact that there have been no reports of recent premeditated mass atrocities by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Also significant are the decrease in the number of reported deaths in the first quarter of 2014 relative to 2012 and 2013; the decline in the number of abductions compared to the fourth quarter of 2013; and the decrease in the number of displaced persons in the LRA-affected areas of the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. That success in reducing the number of displaced persons has been attributed, in part, to the improved security being enjoyed by communities around the Garamba National Park following operations against LRA bases in the Park by the African Union (AU) Regional Task Force. We commend the Force for its achievements and acknowledge with appreciation the support of the United States and other international partners in that regard.

Another success story is the lack of LRA attacks in South Sudan during the period under review.

Challenges nevertheless remain in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the Central African Republic, there was an upward trend in LRA activity in the first quarter of 2014, with more attacks and abductions. That is reported to be concentrated in communities in eastern Central African Republic. While the attention of the international community has been focused on the sectarian conflict in other parts of the country, we are concerned that the LRA leadership is taking advantage of the current instability and lack of State control over the national territory to regroup in the north-eastern part of the Central African Republic. The suspected collusion of some ex-Séléka fighters with the LRA is also a matter of concern to us, as they may be providing the LRA with information about the operations of the Regional Task Force. That represents a grave threat to the conduct of anti-LRA operations, and we would hope that the Regional Task Force is taking the necessary measures against that threat.

We take positive note of the biannual meeting of the LRA focal points that took place in Entebbe, Uganda, on 13 and 14 February, and the fact that it was co-chaired by Special Representative of the Secretary-General Moussa and the African Union's Special Envoy for the Lord's Resistance Army issue, Francisco Madeira. That kind of coordination between the AU and the United Nations is crucial in forging a common understanding on the way forward in the fight against the LRA. We look forward to the planned AU consultative workshop on the long-term stability of the LRA-affected countries, which is expected to build on a preliminary assessment conducted by the World Bank.

The full implementation of the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the activities of the LRA is crucial if the threat posed by the group is to be neutralized. That would depend on providing resources in a timely and adequate manner and on building the requisite capacities of judicial and Government systems and the military capabilities of the countries affected by the LRA. The international community is required to provide the necessary political, technical and financial support for the successful implementation of that initiative, in line with the priorities identified by the African Union and the principle of national ownership.

Political stability and strong national security institutions in the region will help to consolidate the gains made in the fight against the LRA. The plight of persons displaced by LRA attacks and the long-term development needs of LRA-affected areas must be addressed in tandem and remain an integral part of the comprehensive approach.

We express our support for the draft presidential statement to be adopted after this meeting. We also pay tribute to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Moussa for his achievements as Special Representative. We wish him well in his future endeavours and look forward to working with his successor.

Mr. De Antueno (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we would like to join others in thanking Mr. Abou Moussa for the work he has carried out at the Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and his leadership in support of regional efforts in conflict prevention.

The crisis in the Central African Republic is an issue of great concern. We are confident that the renewed efforts by the international community and the Organization, including the deployment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, will be up to the task of dealing with the many challenges faced by the Central African Republic. We call on UNOCA to continue to work with the transition Government in order to establish and strengthen coordination with

neighbouring countries and key players in addressing the humanitarian consequences of the crisis.

Regarding security, we also call on UNOCA to continue to work on ensuring cooperation in strengthening cross-border controls and to confront the growing threats posed by terrorism and trafficking in arms and natural resources. The trafficking and illegal trade in natural resources are worrying not only because of their environmental and economic consequences but because of their links to armed groups and their financing. We urge UNOCA to continue to promote regional efforts to deal with this challenge.

Regarding the Boko Haram armed group, we share in the condemnation of its activities and the concern that those activities are increasing and the group's area of influence is expanding. The establishment of the Multinational Joint Task Force was an important step forward in dealing with the group and with illegal and terrorist activities in the subregion. With regard to the Gulf of Guinea, we are sorry to see that the Secretary-General's report (S/2014/319) emphasizes the fact that the region is now the area of the world most seriously affected by piracy, robbery at sea, organized crime and illegal fishing. We urge UNOCA to strengthen coordination in dealing with these issues, which pose a particular threat to peace and security.

It is positive news that the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has not been able to carry out large-scale violations of human rights and is to some degree on the defensive. In that regard, we commend the efforts of the African Union's Regional Task Force to fight the group and those aimed at promoting the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation of LRA members. However, the attacks referred to in the Secretary-General's report indicate that the group is still active and that we should not halt our efforts. The withdrawal of Uganda's troops from the African Union Task Force fighting the LRA is significant, and we call on countries in the region to take the steps necessary to avoid a security vacuum that the LRA might exploit.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Abou Moussa, for his briefing today.

We agree with the worrying assessments voiced here of the negative effects of the armed conflict in the Central African Republic on the situation in Central Africa in general. Among other destabilizing factors, we would single out the increase in Boko Haram's activities, the risks of terrorism and threats to marine security in the Gulf of Guinea. The porous borders and weak State institutions in the Sahel-Sahara zone merit special mention, compounded as they are by specific challenges emanating from Mali and Libya, many of which have their origins in the events in Libya of three years ago.

We support the efforts of countries in Central and West Africa to combat these challenges and threats. We take note of the work of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa in promoting peace and security, preventing conflicts and combating the terrorist threats of piracy and armed robbery at sea, which it carries out in cooperation with regional players and United Nations bodies. We commend the great personal contribution to collective efforts in these areas by the Head of the Regional Office, Mr. Moussa, and we wish his successor, Mr. Bathily, success in this vital post.

We note with satisfaction the significant decline in the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). This formerly large and menacing organized gang is now reduced to a few small groups numbering no more than 350 people, including women and children. We note the drastic drop in the number of attacks, killings and kidnappings, as well as in the numbers of those fleeing the bandits or afraid to return to their homes. Essentially, a handful of militants are now operating in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo in survival mode, living mainly off petty thievery. As a result of the joint efforts of the countries of Africa themselves and of the African Union's Regional Cooperative Initiative, with the support of the international community, it seems that this group's activities no longer pose a threat to peace and security in the region.

Of course, the effectiveness of the operations against the LRA is bound to be affected by the current crises in the Central African Republic and South Sudan and by the ongoing problems with contingents' resources. Nevertheless, we firmly believe that in the not-too-distant future we will see the day when the last bandit will be neutralized, captured or handed over, and that this criminal armed group will cease to exist. The regional players themselves must play a decisive role in this. Among the challenges they have to deal with, priorities are strengthening the coordination of efforts to combat the group, including between

the African Union Regional Task Force and the African Union peacekeeping contingent in the Central African Republic. The problem cannot be solved by military means alone, however. What is needed is a comprehensive approach that includes security sector reform, finding solutions to pressing socioeconomic and humanitarian problems and strengthening government institutions in the countries of the subregion.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

We thank Special Representative Abou Moussa for his final briefing. The Republic of Korea appreciates his leadership and the contribution he has made during the past three years since the launch of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa.

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), one of the most persistent and brutal armed groups in Africa, has been substantially weakened. The joint strategy of the African Union and the United Nations has been instrumental in countering the LRA. In order to eliminate the LRA's lifeline, however, further cooperation and enhanced coordination among all stakeholders are crucial. We are concerned that the worsening situation in the Central African Republic and South Sudan could provide the LRA with a breathing space. We call on all relevant countries to fully support the efforts of the African Union (AU) Regional Task Force to combat the LRA. The missions of the United Nations and national Governments should enhance their information-sharing and cross-border cooperation in order to effectively implement the AU's Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA.

Through its unanimous adoption of resolution 2149 (2014), the Security Council made clear its strong commitment to multidimensional engagement in the Central African Republic. It is important that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic maximize its cooperation with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur on a common approach in support of the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement efforts across the area affected by the LRA.

Other subregional threats, unfortunately, remain unabated. We are particularly concerned about the unacceptable criminal activities of Boko Haram. The Republic of Korea strongly condemns its terrorist attacks and abductions of schoolgirls. We call for a concerted effort on the part of the international community to deal with the threat posed by this terrorist group. We should seek accountability for gross human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by any armed groups in the Central African region and beyond.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The Council has before it the text of a statement by the President on behalf of the Council on the subject of today's meeting. I thank Council members for their valuable contributions to the statement. In accordance with the understanding reached among the members of the Council, I shall take it that the members of the Security Council agree to the statement, which will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2014/8.

It is so decided.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. Given that this was his final briefing to the Council as Special Representative and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Moussa for his exceptional service.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.50 a.m.